

Felix Fluke

Snow sprinkled the pine trees like powdered sugar. A highway slithered through crevices in the mountains. On the otherwise-still morning, a semitruck glided across the asphalt. Felix leaned into the passenger window of the truck, feeling the door press and release his torso with every winding turn. A mile marker caught his eye.

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His bony legs, clad in a pair of black jeans, both bobbed on the carpet. His gray, oversized hoodie swallowed his white t-shirt like a shadow. A fringe of emerald hair hung in his face.

“Can we, uh. . .” ventured the boy, avoiding eye contact with the trucker, “can we listen to music or something?”

“I’m more of a talk radio guy myself,” the driver responded.

“That’s fine,” said the kid. “I’ll take anything that’s not more silence.” The trucker flipped to a random AM station. There a fatherly voice consoled a frantic, teenaged voice.

“It’s about realizing who you are, Melanie,” instructed the man.

“And I know my status as a daughter,” Melanie answered, starting her statement with an *and* as if her words were the continuation of a half-formed thought, “but I *just* want to now God’s will for my life.”

“Are you sure about that?” the kid blurted out. In response, the trucker erupted into laughter. “I’m serious,” protested the young passenger. “Learning grand, heavy truths about life can make you a heavy-hearted person.” The trucker silenced the radio.

“What would you know about ‘heavy truths’?” The younger one answered with a shrug:

“I’m just old enough to know a thing or two.”

“Are you chummy with God then?”

“He’s a good boss,” the boy answered, triggering another round of chuckles from his driver. The older man questioned him further:

“What exactly is your mission from God?”

“To drift from place to place, spreading good fortune wherever I go and reminding people that God hasn’t given up on them—that’s my mission. Sometimes it’s the small strokes of good fortune that make all the difference, you know?”

His acquaintance only shook his head, suppressed another outburst, and focused on his wrestling match with the steering wheel. The road came to a head at a cracked, pothole-ridden intersection. The welcome sign for Votsboro glared at them from the other side of the street. The trucker parked next to a gas pump and fumbled for his credit card.

“Don’t waste your money here,” the kid told him. Placing his hand on the dashboard, Felix caused every needle in the truck’s instrument cluster to glow with an emerald hue. A faint gurgle filled the gas tanks under their feet as the gasoline needle climbed from E to F. “I’ll see you in Heaven someday,” he told the older man before grabbing his water canteen and venturing into Votsboro.

Felix trekked through parking lots and open fields. Locals squinted at the outsider while providing lip service in the form of polite greetings. Many heads turned to observe the green-haired kid marching down the shoulder of the town’s main boulevard. His feet eventually found their way into a thicket, where a maroon tool shed stood guard at the edge of the trees.

Spotting an outcropping of rocks behind the shed, Felix proceeded to tap them with his fingers. Several of them replied with the tiny thud of a struck stone, but one greeted him with the

crisp *thwack* of plastic. He parted the plastic stone into halves; it split perfectly along a fissure. Inside lay a single key on a bed of packing foam. Felix gained access to the shed, slipped the key into his pocket, and contorted his arm to re-fasten the shed's padlock from the inside. Then, he allowed his fatigue to overtake him.

The young traveler awoke to the all-to-familiar sound of handheld thunder. A slender column of light streamed through the shed's newly-formed peephole. Outside, brass clinked against the coarse dirt, followed by a courtesy call:

"You've got ten seconds to get outta there!"

TO BE CONTINUED (W.I.P.)